GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:38
ANSWERED ON:26.02.2002
DOWRY ATROCITIES AGAINST WOMEN
JASWANT SINGH YADAV

Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the number of complaints received by the National Commission for Women pertaining to dowry harassment and atrocities against women during the year 1999-2000 and 2000- 2001 and 2001-2002 till date;

(b) the number of complaints on which effective action has been taken so far; and

(c) the steps taken or proposed to be taken by the Government to protect women and safeguard their rights?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI SUMITRA MAHAJAN)

(a) As reported by the National Commission for Women (NCW), the break up of the complaints received by them is indicated below:

Period received	Total complaints	Dowry Harassment
1999-2000	4300	675
2000-2001	5005	828
2001 to till date	3499	631

(b) The NCW has intimated that appropriate actions have been initiated or taken on all the complaints in consultation with or by referring to Police, State Governments, State Women Commissions, NGOs. In certain cases the Commission constituted an enquiry committee to investigate into the complaints.

(c) To protect the women from dowry harassment Government has enacted the Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961. Sections 304 B and 489 A of the India Penal Code also deal with dowry death and the offence of cruelty, both mental and physical, towards a married woman by her husband or relatives. Section 113-B of the Indian Evidence Act, 1872 provides that Courts may presume the guilt of the husband or relative who had subjected the women to cruelty in connection with dowry.

The direct responsibility for implementing these laws is that of State Governments and the mechanisms under them. The Government has, however, advised all State Governments to appoint Dowry Prohibition Officers and to notify rules under the provisions of the Dowry Prohibition Act.

The National Commission for Women is in the process of reviewing the Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961 to make its provisions more stringent and effective.

Since the menace of dowry is a reflection of women's low status in society, Government have taken a number of steps to raise the status of women and to change societal attitudes towards girls and women. These include media campaigns, awareness generation camps, spreading legal literacy, counselling, legal aid, support to voluntary agencies and schemes for the socio-economic empowerment of women.

The recently adopted National Policy for the Empowerment of Women is also committed to eliminating the incidence of all forms of violence against women, including those arising from customs such as dowry.